

**Testimony by Paul D. Acker, Co-chair
Keep the Promise Coalition – Adult Committee
Mental Health Provider – InterCommunity Inc.**

**Re: DMHAS Budget Hearing
Wednesday, February 21, 2012**

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Paul Acker, co-chair of the Keep the Promise Coalition's Adult Committee and a mental health provider at InterCommunity Inc. in East Hartford. I am here tonight to testify in opposition to several of the proposals in the DMHAS budget included in House Bill 5014, An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures and Revenues for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2013.

KTP is opposed to the \$480,000 cut to Young Adult Services. This program provides needed mental health treatment, employment support, life skill development and housing assistance to young adults with serious mental illnesses. As a person who has received mental health services periodically since the age of 5, it would have been life-changing to have had young adult services while transitioning to adulthood. These services could have given me the tools necessary to have avoided 14 years on disability.

KTP also urges you to oppose the proposal to restructure the Medicaid LIA (Low Income Adult program) by (1) counting family income and assets in determining the eligibility of individuals under age 26 and (2) limiting services for all program participants, including physician visits, nursing facility stays and home health services. This would establish a second-tier services system and counteract the cost-saving measure of early treatment.

In addition, KTP opposes the proposal to cut inpatient legal services by \$100,000. People who are receiving inpatient mental health services are particularly vulnerable. Removing this funding would further increase the difficulty of receiving legal services. It is critical that people's rights are preserved in a restrictive setting that has historically

put patient's rights last across the nation. CT must continue to lead the way in recovery-oriented care that respects the rights of the individuals they serve.

Lastly, I would like to support the Governor's requested COLA (cost of living adjustment) increase for community providers and his increase in funding for **Supportive Housing**. As we know, it is crucial to properly support community providers and Supportive Housing initiatives, both of which continue to save our State a substantial amount of money and most importantly, increase quality of life for our friends, neighbors and families. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you for your time.